



Bureau of the Public Debt's  
Administrative Resource Center

## Human Resources Directive Franchise Services

**Number:** HRD FS 315-1

**Original Issue Date:** January 1999

**Review Date:**

### **Subject: Probationary Periods for Initial Appointment to a Supervisory or Managerial Position**

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1. **PURPOSE**

This directive establishes policy on the probationary period for new supervisors and managers. The probationary period is to develop supervisory and managerial skills and abilities which cannot be developed in other kinds of positions. The period is also used to assess the performance of a new supervisor or manager. An employee may be returned to a non-supervisory position if appropriate.
2. **SCOPE**

This document applies to all supervisory and managerial employees except those in the Senior Executive Service.
3. **REFERENCES**

This policy is consistent with the following regulations and guidelines:

  - a. 5 U.S.C. 3321.
  - b. CFR 315.901 through 315.909.
  - c. Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) General Schedule Supervisory Guide.
4. **DEFINITION**

A supervisory or managerial position generally:

  - a. Accomplishes work through the direction of other people.
  - b. Directs the work of an organizational unit.
  - c. Accounts for specific line or staff functions.
  - d. Monitors and evaluates the progress of the organization toward meeting goals.
  - e. Makes adjustments in objectives, work plans, schedules, and commitment of resources.

The people directed may be federal employees, non-federal workers, volunteers, students, or others. Managerial positions may serve as the head or assistant head of a major organization or direct a specialized program of marked difficulty.

Referral to "supervisory" in this directive refers to both supervisory and managerial.
5. **RESPONSIBILITIES**
  - a. Human Resources Division ensures that supervisory and managerial probationary procedures are established and followed.
  - b. Employment and Classification Branch and Franchise Employment Services Branch:
    - (1) Ensures positions are clearly identified as supervisory, managerial, or non-supervisory.
    - (2) Ensures vacancy announcements for supervisory and managerial positions include the following statement:

"Satisfactory completion of a one-year supervisory or managerial probationary period is required unless previously completed."

- c. Payroll and Employee Services Operations Branch:
  - (1) Determines if selectees for supervisory or managerial positions have completed the appropriate probationary period.
  - (2) Documents the probationary period on the SF-50B, Notification of Personnel Action.
  - (3) Files the form certifying satisfactory completion of the probationary period in the Official Personnel Folder (OPF).
- d. Labor and Employee Relations Branch provides advice and assistance on appropriate action in cases of unsuccessful performance.
- e. Employee's Immediate Supervisor:
  - (1) Discusses with the employee performance requirements for the new job.
  - (2) Provides opportunities for new supervisors and managers to develop supervisory and managerial skills.
  - (3) Communicates standards.
  - (4) Discusses performance during the probationary period.
  - (5) Certifies successful completion of the employee's probationary period.
  - (6) Initiates action to move an employee to a non-supervisory position during the probationary period for supervisory performance deficiencies.

## 6. REQUIREMENTS

- a. Employees must complete a one-year probationary period upon initial permanent assignment to a supervisory or managerial position.
- b. Exclusions:
  - (1) Employees who, as of August 11, 1979, were serving or had served in supervisory or managerial positions.
  - (2) Employees serving on temporary appointment, temporary promotion, or detail to a supervisory or managerial position.
  - (3) Employees who have satisfactorily completed the probationary period in another agency, occupation, or position.

## 7. CREDITABLE SERVICE

- a. Prior Partial Service. If an employee previously served a partial probationary period, the time is credited toward the new probation. This is true unless the employee was removed from the prior position due to unsatisfactory performance.
- b. Transfer During Probationary Period. If reassigned from one supervisory position to another during the probationary period, service credit for supervisory probation continues. This also applies if employee is transferred or promoted to another supervisory position during probation.
- c. Time Spent on Temporary Promotion, Appointment or Detail to Supervisory or Managerial Position. This time can be creditable if the employee is currently serving a probationary period in a permanent supervisory or managerial position.

- d. Non-pay Status. Absence in non-pay status is creditable up to a total of 22 workdays. Additional non-pay time extends the probationary period by an equal amount. Absence due to compensable injury or military duty is fully creditable.
- e. Unsatisfactory Completion of Probation. The probationary period is not completed if the employee is removed for cause or returned to a non-supervisory position.
- f. Missing Documentation. If an employee fails to provide proof of previous service, the employee will be required to serve a new probationary period. This determination may be appealed under agency grievance procedures.

**8. RELATIONSHIP TO  
OTHER ACTIONS**

- a. Tenure. Serving a supervisory or managerial probationary period does not affect the employee's tenure group.
- b. Probationary Period for Initial Appointment. Employees can fulfill the probationary period requirements for both initial appointment and new supervisor at the same time. They are not required to complete a probationary period for their initial appointment then complete a supervisory probation.
- c. Removal for Reasons Other than Supervisory or Managerial Performance. Nothing in this directive prohibits taking action against an employee for reasons unrelated to supervisory or managerial performance.

**9. FAILURE TO  
SATISFACTORILY  
COMPLETE THE  
PROBATIONARY  
PERIOD**

- a. Unsatisfactory Performance. The employee must be returned or reassigned to a non-supervisory position if his or her performance is not acceptable. Reduction-in-Force procedures may not be used.
- b. Basis for Return. The return of an employee to a non-supervisory position must be based on effectiveness and performance as a supervisor or manager. It should not be for other performance deficiencies.
- c. The Decision. The employee's immediate supervisor initiates the action to return the employee to a non-supervisory position. The next higher level supervisor in the organization must concur.
- d. Notice to Employee. The employee must be given a written notice that he/she will be returned to a non-supervisory position and the reasons why. Agency grievance rights and EEO appeal rights should also be provided at this time.
- e. The Position. An employee removed from a supervisory or managerial position is entitled to placement in a non-supervisory position. Placement is based on qualifications and available positions. The following guidelines apply:
  - (1) The position should not be at a lower grade or pay than the one the employee left to accept the probationary position. However, if the former position was a higher grade, the employee is entitled to a position at the same grade and pay as the probationary position.
  - (2) The position must be within the agency or bureau. A transferred employee does not have entitlement to a position at his or her former agency.
  - (3) There is no authority to hold open a position vacated by a newly selected supervisory manager or to fill it only by temporary appointment.
  - (4) Unsatisfactory completion of the supervisory probationary period cannot be the reason for denying consideration for other supervisory or managerial positions.

- f. Pay Setting. An employee who does not complete probation and is returned to the former grade level gets credit toward a within grade increase (WGI). The time spent at the higher grade counts toward the waiting period for a WGI. Grade or pay retention do not apply.
- g. Documentation. An SF-52, Request for Personnel Action, must be submitted to document the reassignment or change to lower grade. An SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action, will be filed in the OPF.
- h. Effective Date. Must be no later than the day before the end of the employee's probationary period.

#### **10. APPEALS AND GRIEVANCES**

- a. An employee who doesn't believe a probationary period is necessary may file an agency grievance. This cannot be appealed to the Merit System Protection Board (MSPB).
- b. An action to return an employee to a non-supervisory position may be grieved under the agency grievance procedures. This cannot be appealed to MSPB.
- c. Allegations of discrimination due to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, physical handicap, or age are processed as discrimination complaints. Final action is appealable to Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.
- d. Allegations of discrimination due to marital status or political affiliation are appealable to MSPB.

#### **11. OFFICE OF PRIMARY INTEREST**

Human Resources Division, Administrative Resource Center  
Franchise Customers (as appropriate)

Thomas W. Harrison, Executive Director  
Administrative Resource Center